

Historic, Archive Document

Do not assume content reflects current scientific knowledge, policies, or practices.

1935
1769 E

HOUSEHOLD CALENDAR

The September Fruit and Vegetable Market

A radio interview between Miss Ruth Van Deman, Bureau of Home Economics, and Mr. Wells A. Sherman, Bureau of Agricultural Economics, delivered in the Department of Agriculture period of the National Farm and Home Hour, broadcast by a network of 48 associate NBC stations, Wednesday, September 25, 1935.

----ooOoo----

MR. SALISBURY: Now for a Household Calendar talk, with our friend Ruth Van Deman in the lead. And as supporting talent Mr. Wells A. Sherman, specialist in market information on fruits and vegetables. Miss Van Deman, Mr. Sherman the microphone is yours.

MISS VAN DEMAN: Thank you, Mr. Salisbury. I'm glad you mentioned the supporting talent. If I have my way Mr. Sherman's going to do most of the talking today. Mr. Sherman, I know you have a lot to tell us about your trip to Michigan.

MR. SHERMAN: And Ohio and Indiana. Don't leave them out, Miss Van Deman.

MISS VAN DEMAN: Sorry, I certainly didn't mean to overlook Ohio and Indiana. Well, what shall we start with?

MR. SHERMAN: With the peaches, I think. We may as well give the peaches a formal farewell for this year. The warm weather of last week ripened up the peaches in Michigan and the Ohio fruit belt very rapidly. When I was there peaches were moving out by truck and train and boat to the big cities of the Middle West.

MISS VAN DEMAN: Just where in Ohio are these big peach orchards?

MR. SHERMAN: Along the southern shore of Lake Erie. Especially on the peninsula that runs out into the lake and forms the north shore of Sandusky Bay. A very historic place, by the way. That sheltered bay is where Admiral Perry built and fitted out his ships against the British back in the War of 1812.

MISS VAN DEMAN: That's interesting. Nothing warlike around there now, I take it.

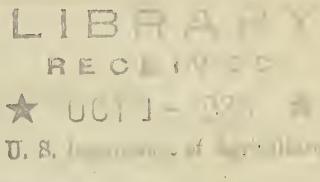
MR. SHERMAN: No, not now. The peninsula is a land of orchards and summer homes, a fine place to grow fruit.

MISS VAN DEMAN: Most of those peaches were Elbertas, I suppose.

MR. SHERMAN: Yes. The early varieties are gone. Only the Elbertas are left, with possibly a few Smocks and Hales.

MISS VAN DEMAN: Are any of these peaches canned?

(over)



MR. SHERMAN: Yes, the cannery at Benton Harbor, Michigan, was packing No. 10's for pie stock, and smaller cans with halves for dessert purposes. If these free-stone peaches are ripe when they go into the cans, they may not make such a fancy looking pack but they certainly have the flavor.

MISS VAN DEMAN: I wish fresh peaches could get a little riper before they go to the market.

MR. SHERMAN: Well, you know a peach is a very delicate fruit. Nature didn't intend a peach to be a long distance traveler. And the moment a peach gets a bruise on its downy cheek, Mistress Consumer turns up her nose. Personally I'd rather have a ripe peach with a few bruises than a perfect-looking peach with hard green flesh underneath a beautiful exterior. Maybe if you can educate the consumer, Miss Van Deman --

MISS VAN DEMAN: You forget, Mr. Sherman, you are educating the consumer right now.

MR. SHERMAN: I hope so. This is a consumer talk. All right, maybe consumers would like to hear about the grape crop.

MISS VAN DEMAN: They certainly would. What are the prospects?

MR. SHERMAN: Excellent. There's a good looking crop of grapes on the vines in Ohio and Michigan --

MISS VAN DEMAN: And New York State?

MR. SHERMAN: Yes, I didn't go there on this trip, but our reports indicate that this is a good grape year in general. Of course I'm speaking now of the Concords and other varieties of slip-skins developed from our native wild grapes. The California grapes came from European stock, and are a different proposition in the way they're grown and marketed.

MISS VAN DEMAN: Yes, I've noticed the California grapes are in boxes and the Concords and grapes of that kind in baskets.

MR. SHERMAN: That's right. And the standard basket sizes are 2, 4, and 12 pounds. Needless to say the consumer generally finds the price of the grapes per pound cheaper in the larger baskets.

MISS VAN DEMAN: But whether the lower price is more economical depends on the size of the family and many other things. I grew up with the idea that every family should have a barrel of apples in the storeroom during the fall and winter, but times have changed. Speaking of apples, I hear that this is going to be a big year for apples.

MR. SHERMAN: Yes, all signs point that way. But let's talk about apples next month. October is the big apple month.

Now, I want to tell you about the truck region I visited where the farmers are growing onions and carrots and spinach and celery on jet black muck. These areas of muck are old lake beds that generally become tamarack swamps or marshes filled with coarse grass and other rank vegetation. This muck is just vegetable

matter partially decayed under water. All these muck beds have to be artificially drained. When they are very dry and not covered with crops, the soil is so light that it will blow away. As a precaution the farmers have planted wind-breaks of willows at frequent intervals across their muck fields.

Another peculiarity of this muck is the way it absorbs and holds the heat of the sun, so that crops keep on growing there for two or three weeks after the frosts have killed them on adjacent fields. I saw acres and acres of spinach up there last week with leaves no larger than a silver dollar. That spinach stands every chance of making a fine crop next month to feed the spinach eaters of Chicago and Detroit.

MISS VAN DEMAN: Good news for small boys. You spoke about the onions - how are they in quality?

MR. SHERMAN: Very questionable. This has been a disappointing year for onions almost everywhere east of the Rockies. The extremely hot weather has made onions small and late rains are making them rot. We'll probably have bigger and better onions from the irrigated districts of Colorado, Utah, and Idaho.

But speaking of things with pungent flavor, do you know about the fields of peppermint in Michigan and Indiana?

MISS VAN DEMAN: Fields of peppermint, did you say?

MR. SHERMAN: Yes, there are thousands of acres planted to peppermint and spearmint. Where did you think all the oil came from to flavor all the peppermint candy and spearmint chewing gum and odorous tooth pastes?

MISS VAN DEMAN: Can't say I ever thought a thing about it. Do they cut the mint plants green and send them to a factory to have the oil extracted?

MR. SHERMAN: Distil, is the word. Yes, 30 pounds of oil from an acre of flowering mint plants is considered a good average yield.

MISS VAN DEMAN: Well, I've added something to my book of knowledge. Any more news of our well-known vegetables?

MR. SHERMAN: I might add a word about tomatoes. I haven't seen such tomatoes before this year, as I did on this trip. All the canneries were running full blast on red ripe stock.

MISS VAN DEMAN: Well, with that good news, we'll have to sign off today. Thank you Mr. Sherman and goodbye everybody until the next Household Calendar day.

